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ABSTRACT

This paper examines techniques for dealing with behavior problems in students. The Bill of Rights and the 14th Amendment protect individuals' rights and must be considered in developing effective punitive consequences to control misbehaving students. Due process must be practiced in handling disciplinary sanctions. Principals and teachers can use the privilege of participation in school-provided services to force misbehaving students to correct their behavior. Corporal punishment is legal in public schools in 38 states and is prohibited in public schools in only 12 states. Public support for observable punishments issued by judges indicates the public's readiness for such punitive consequences to be implemented to produce desirable behavior changes. Teachers are encouraged to practice "nondoormat" behaviors in which they exhibit social powers in their actions with students. Five types of social power impacting the quality and quantity of classroom learning are described. Guidelines are offered for using extrinsic rewards as reinforcers for desired behavior. Lists are presented of punitive consequences that can be implemented by principals, teachers, and parents to control children's behavior. Practices that teachers can use to show a "nondoormat" behavior are also listed. Observable punishments that local city and county governments can use to discourage students from involvement in crime are noted. (JDD)

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THE REAL CUTTING EDGE IN EDUCATION: CHANGING MISBEHAVING STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL

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Association of Teacher Educators
ATE's Diamond Jubilee
75 Years On The Cutting Edge
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Misbehaving students are still affecting the quality of classroom teaching and job satisfaction in many of our schools. This presentation will explore and propose some radical strategies to resolve misbehaving student problems in classrooms and schools.

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The Real Cutting Edge in Education: Changing Misbehaving Students in the Classroom and School

Introduction

Too long the home, community, and school have fallen under the weak and noninterference resolve that any type of punishment that may cause embarrassment to the student should not, must not, and cannot be used. Yet, this practice has backfired over and over again. In the long run students are embarrassed for their misbehavior eventually because their actions cause embarrassment to the home, the school, the community, through the media, and the nation at large. Therefore, the time is here, the time is now, that we put behind many of our failed notions that have allowed the misbehaving student to filter through and nearly crumble the very foundation of our classroom and the school's positive learning environment.

Let's recall the Michael P. Fay incident, in a nation where embarrassment is put aside when an individual misbehaves. For instance, Michael P. Fay, an 18 year old American who lived in Singapore and pleaded guilty to vandalism (spray painting cars) was sentenced to six strokes with a cane. The interesting point to note is the punishment of canning is routinely applied to citizens of Singapore and student vandalism and misbehavior are almost nonexistence in this society.

There are perhaps, lessons to be learned by teachers and principals from the above mentioned situation. These lessons will undoubtly raise questions that will help teachers and principals foster a school environment where all teachers can teach and all students can learn. These questions are as follows:

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1. Should teachers and principals apply more physical punitive consequences to misbehaving students in school?
2. Should schools assist parents in developing appropriate punitive consequences to control the misbehavior of their children?
3. Should all teachers practice a "nondoormat" behavior in their work with students in the classroom?
4. Should schools encourage city and county government to issue observable punishment to students involved in minor crimes?

The thought of these questions, I am certain, will appear to be radical to some. To others, they will appear to be against our great American values. But some young people are misbehaving in and out of school at such an alarming rate, if radical effective changes are not proposed and implemented to solve a society problem we will continue to lose a significant number of our young people in the age group from 14 to 28 years of age.

Bill of Rights and Fourteenth Amendment

The question that should be asked at this point of our discussion is how can principals, teachers and the local government implement effective punitive consequences to control misbehaving students in the school and classroom without infringing on our Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment. These are powerful instruments in our country to protect an individual's rights. In fact, these two instruments require principals and teachers to practice procedural due process to guarantee freedom from arbitrary actions (A Legal Memorandum NASSP Jan. 1990).

It appears to me that to use stronger punitive consequences to control or manage misbehaving students in school, teachers and principals must be certain to practice due process in handling disciplinary sanctions. That is, of course, students must be forewarned of conduct that may result in punitive consequences for their misbehavior in the school and classroom.

Since principals and teachers may want to deny a student's participation in a school program to achieve a desired student behavior, it is necessary to know whether the student has a property right to participation in the educational process. However, according to T. Page Johnson (1990), the writer of A Legal Memorandum, there was no suggestion that a student has constitutionally protected interest in participation in each of the separate components of the educational process (athletics, clubs, social events, etc.). Therefore, principals and teachers can use participation in school provided services to force misbehaving students to correct their behavior. This also means that students can be removed from bus transportation, entrance into honor society, exclusion from attendance at school activities, and other functions in the educational process for misbehavior in the school or classroom. So, can corporal punishment be included as a punitive consequence to control misbehaving students?

Corporal Punishment

The use of corporal punishment in this country as a means of disciplining school children dates back to the colonial period. In fact, according to Nathan L. Essex (1989), corporal punishment is currently legal in 38 states in the U.S. There are only 12 states that

prohibit corporal punishment in public schools. They are California, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New york, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and Wisconsin. So, unless the local school board has developed a policy against the practice of corporal punishment, it is legal to use paddling a student to make him/her behave properly in most states in the United States.

Public Reactions

"Is sparing the rod spoiling the child?" John Alter and Pat Wingert in a February 6, 1995 article in Newsweek, titled **The Return of Shame** stated that Judge Walter Williams, who presides over municipal court in Chattanooga, Tenn., took an 18 year old to the woodshed for treatment. Williams decided the 18 year old tuff, who has been arrested for assault in an alleged drive-by-shooting, was not too old to learn from an old fashioned trip to the woodshed. "He needed to be gotten under control", says the judge. So Williams asked his mother, if she would allow him to paddle her son. She agreed. Williams took the young man into chambers and whipped him. The mother said "the judge did exactly what he should have done". The young man is now working for his high-school diploma. He also calls the judge regularly to tell him about his progress.

There were other punitive consequences implemented by Judge Williams to correct the misbehavior of youth. For example, (1) a youth who broke into a Baptist Church was sentenced to shine the pews. Example (2), a prankster set off fire alarms at a busy hotel and squads of fire engines rushed to the scene, so Williams ordered the young prankster to polish the department's trucks. Judge Williams said "you get retribution, and you get deterrence, because others see what happens when you break the law". Thus the public

appears to be ready for observable punitive consequences to be implemented to produce a desirable change in misbehaving youth.

I read an article, recently in the Arkansas Democrat Gazette, February 5, 1995 by Deborah Halter, a social commentator. Ms. Halter in her article titled, **Stronger School Discipline Works...** reported that the local police informed her that her son was the ringleader of a group of boys that opened up a fire hydrant down by the highway. She said she resisted the national past time of blaming any child's problems on her situation as a single mother, bringing up boys alone with no spouse and no child support. She further stated that "the kid just screwed up; he deserved to be disciplined by law enforcement and the court". So, again parents and the public appear to be waking up to the relationship between the misbehavior of youth and punitive consequences.

Non-doormat Behavior

After spending many years as a secondary school teacher of mathematics, my experience tells me that a teacher can not have an effectively managed classroom where the teacher can teach and the students can learn if the teacher has a doormat behavior. This, of course, means the teacher (1) cannot demand others to respect their rights, (2) is unable to make eye contact with the student, (3) can not resist being coerced or manipulated by student, (4) is wimpy and wishy-washy, and (5) cannot communicate to students that you are serious about your teaching and the behavior expected of students. Emmer, Evertson, Clements and Worsham (1994) reported that teachers with these behaviors will find teaching uncomfortable and will have particular difficulty with discipline or controlling misbehaving

students in the classroom. So, for the teacher to practice a "nondoormat" behavior in the classroom, they must possess and show certain social powers in their interactions with students.

Social Power

Teachers work in classrooms. Classrooms contain students. Students are humans. Humans are social creatures. So the teacher must have social power. According to O'Itair and Blase (1992), social power refers to possessing control, authority, or influence over others. They also feel that there are five (5) types of power used by teachers impacting the quality and quantity of the learning taking place in the classroom:

(1) Coercive power - is associated with the teacher's ability to punish others and take away their privileges.

(2) Reward power - just as coercive power, involves presenting something that is unpleasant or removing something pleasant if the student fails to comply.

(3) Legitimate power - is assigned power: it reflects students' perceptions that the teacher has the right to make certain demands because of the position.

(4) Expert power - is just that, the teacher is an expert in his/her field. This power is increased or decreased depending upon the students' perceptions of the teacher.

(5) Referent power - is based on the strength of the interpersonal relationship between two or more individuals.

The authors found referent power and to a lesser degree, expert power to be associated with increased student learning. Thus in usual classroom environments, when teachers have an increase in student learning, there is a decrease in classroom discipline

problems. A teacher, therefore, must be perceived by students to have confidence, skills (know how) and compassion to effectively manage today's classroom students.

Using Consequences or Reward

Since consequences for a students behavior may be either positive or negative they are sometimes viewed as reinforcers. Reinforcers may be rewards. So rewards are either positive or negative. Teachers and administrators who are constantly trying to get students to bring out their best behaviors, are noted for using positive extrinsic rewards to reinforce desired behaviors when they occur. Chance (1992) gave the following positive extrinsic rewards teachers used as reinforcers for desired behavior: good, right, correct or excellent, and nonverbal behavior - smiles, winks, thumbs-up, hugs, congratulatory handshakes, pats on the back and applause and other tangible objects such as gold stars, certificates, candy, prizes and even money.

Chance (1992) also stated that the evidence shows that extrinsic rewards can either enhance or reduce interest in an activity depending on how they are used. He further reported that experts have suggested guidelines for using extrinsic rewards:

1. Use the weakest reward required to strengthen a behavior.
2. When possible, avoid using rewards as incentives.
3. Reward at a high rate in the early stages of learning, and reduce the frequency of rewards as learning progresses.
4. Reward only the behavior you want repeated.
5. Remember that what is an effective reward for one student may not work well with another.

6. Reward success, and set standards so that success is within the student's grasp.

7. Bring attention to the rewards (both intrinsic and extrinsic) that are available for behavior from sources other than the teacher.

Summary

As with rewards, consequences for a student's behavior can either be positive or negative. For this paper, however, since teachers and principals in many schools are struggling with trying to identify punitive consequences that will have a positive effect on changing a misbehaving student's behavior, I have compiled essentially a negative list of consequences. These punitive consequences represent a summary of opinions shared by graduate students in school leadership courses. I think the ideas are worthy of consideration. The punitive consequences that teachers, principals, parents and city and county governments can place into practice to help the principal and teachers establish an environment where teachers can teach and students can learn are as follows:

Physical Punitive Consequences to Control Misbehaving Students in School

Principals:

1. Make detention hall an uncomfortable place to be.
2. Do not permit student to have recess time (Elementary)
3. Take lunch time from student (Secondary) forcing to eat in isolation room.
4. Suspend from all school functions.

5. Time out in an uncomfortable place in the principal's office.

6. Retain after school.

7. In-school suspension.

8. Paddling - dependent on behavior.

9. Require student to clean bathrooms.

10. After school detention.

11. Campus cleanup.

12. Suspended from school and report to city hall for work detail.

13. Be allowed to paddle the child in front of a witness.

14. Withdraw certain privileges.

15. Work off certain offenses (Pick up trash on campus).

16. Arrangement with city and county government for misbehaving students to perform punitive work details at the school, city or county level. Should a student refuse to do punitive work details, the student will be detained by the city or county juvenile correctional center and will remain until punitive work details have been completed.

<u>Teachers:</u>

1. Be well prepared to teach.

2. Arrange an uncomfortable area of the classroom for a small number of misbehaving students. For example, isolate the misbehaving student behind a partition where the teacher can see the student but the student can not see his/her classmates.

3. Corporal punishment.

4. Have student miss out on recess time/special event.
5. Have student write letters of apology to teacher/child they offended.
6. Mark down conduct on report cards.
7. No recess for "X" number of days.
8. Have parent(s) come to school and administer punishment.
9. Correct behavior by having students acknowledge actions and what they need to do to make the situation right.
10. After school detention in classroom.
11. Allow students to create rules and consequences.
12. Prepare & arrange the room as to cut down on the discipline problems.
13. For minor behavior, put the child in time-out for "x" amount of time (elementary).
14. Be allowed to paddle student with a witness present.
15. Don't let problems fester by ignoring them.
16. Close contact with parents by weekly phone calls and notes.

Appropriate Punitive Consequences That Parents Can Use

to Control The Misbehavior of Their Children

1. Remove the privilege of driving the car until appropriate behavior is observed.
2. Teach respect.
3. Teach responsibility.
4. Paddle the child for misbehavior.
5. Assign extra manual work at home for misbehavior.

6. No phone calls.

7. No television.

8. Ground from all extracurricular activities.

9. Parents paddle their child at school but away from peers.

10. Taking away something important to child.

11. Take away privileges.

12. No allowance until misbehavior has been corrected.

13. Give the child boundaries.

14. Place the child in time-out.

15. Talk about behavior you want the child to show.

Practices Teachers Can Use to Show a "Nondoormat" Behavior in Their Work with Students in the Classroom

1. Act and dress professionally.

2. Teach on your feet and move around the room.

3. Be fair, firm and consistent with punishment and rewards.

4. Use seating chart.

5. Be firm and fair.

6. Enforce rules of the school.

7. Look the student in the eye when talking to him/her.

8. Use zero tolerance in the classroom (three strikes by your name, you will receive a punitive consequence).
9. Post the rules for all to see - Write each rule on chart paper as they are discussed.
10. Set a climate for the classroom in addition to rules.
11. Tell students up front what you expect of them.
12. Let students know who is in authority.
13. Provide a setting for a strong classroom structure and routine.
14. Be assertive with your behavior as you explain student expectations in the classroom.
15. Demand respect.
16. Be assertive yet respectful with students.

Observable or Open Punitive Punishments Local City and County Governments Can Use to Discourage Students from Involvement in Crime

1. Work details doing city and county cleanup projects in uniforms.
2. Community service done openly where the public can see the misbehaving student doing a punitive chore.
3. Taking away of driver's license.
4. Making students work for city when suspended.
5. Make available work detail list of punitive jobs to be done in front of students to show it's no fun to commit a crime.
6. Apply curfew laws and truancy laws.
7. For elementary students, a field trip to juvenile detention center.
8. Have parents stay with the child in school after so many incidents of misbehavior.

9. Television advertisements of punitive consequences.

10. Make punishment severe enough that other students won't follow.

11. Make them attend drug awareness or violence awareness seminar.

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